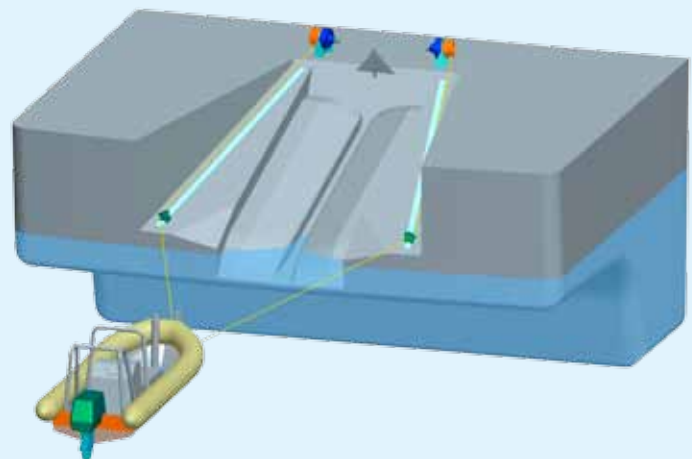


# LAURA Phase 2 gets underway

The “Launch and Recovery of any small navy craft” (LAURA) JIP enters its second phase and calls for new participants. Frans Kremer, f.kremer@marin.nl



Today’s naval operations are seeing the increasing use of smaller craft being deployed from larger platforms, with interceptions and boardings often conducted by fast RHIBs (Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat). This new trend poses challenges and demands on both the design and operation of naval platforms.

One such challenge is the Launch and Recovery (L&R) of the smaller craft in a dynamic seagoing environment. There is a clear requirement for a standard L&R system, which is easy to handle in a wide range of environmental conditions.

A standard system would provide many benefits, not least that ships of various nations could exchange craft when carrying out joint operations and standardisation would also lead to significant cost savings.

**Standard L&R system** To address this issue the Launch and Recovery of any small navy craft (LAURA) JIP was initiated in 2011. LAURA has several key objectives. Any system should be flexible enough to handle a wide variety of small craft (50 kg to 12 tonne) and should be operational in moderate sea states (4-5, possibly up to 6). Additionally, the system should be able to be used at low to moderate ship speeds, be operable with a limited number of crew and be capable of achieving relatively quick L&R operations (5 minutes, targeting at launching every 2 minutes).

Phase 1 was completed in June 2012. During this phase hydrodynamic seakeeping tests with two different small crafts in the immediate vicinity of the mother platform were carried out. Also a wide range of concept

L&R, movement, handling and stowage system designs were considered. Finally, a first draft interface specification for an L&R system was produced.

Phase 2 is expected to last for two years and will further develop the preferred L&R concepts. It will also complete a detailed analysis including relevant model and component testing within the environmental regime to ensure operational issues and mechanical requirements are fully understood. The interface specification will be completed to become an international standard.

JIP LAURA welcomes new members, including navies and UXV suppliers. More detailed information on the results of Phase 1 and a full proposal for Phase 2 is available upon request. □